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The Declaration of Independence

BY THE

CITIZENS OF MECKLENBURG COUNTY,

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ON THE

TWENTIETH DAY OF MAY, 1775,

WITH

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS,

AND THE

PROCEEDINGS OF THE CUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION.

PUBLISHED BY THE GOVERNOR,

Under the authority and direction of the General Assembly of the State of

NORTH CAROLINA.

RALEIGH:

LAWRENCE & LEMAY, Printers to the State.

1831.

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PREFACE.



The resolution of the General Assembly directing this publication, makes it the duty of the Governor to cause to be published in pamphlet form the Report of the committee relative to the Declaration of Independence, and the accompanying documents, in the following order, viz. 1. The Mecklenburg Declaration, with the names of the Delegates composing the meeting; 2. The certificates testifying to the circumstances attending the Declaration; and 3. The proceedings of the Cumberland Association.

In the discharge of this duty, the Governor has deemed it proper to prefix to the publication the following brief review of the evidence by which the authenticity of this interesting portion of the history of North Carolina is controverted and sustained.

On the 30th of April, 1819, the publication marked A, made its appearance in the Raleigh Register. It was communicated to the Editors of that paper by Doct. Joseph M'Nitt, then and now a citizen of the county of Mecklenburg, and was speedily republished in most of the newspapers in the Union. A paper containing it (the Essex Register) was, it seems, on the 22d June, 1819, enclosed to Mr. Jefferson, by his illustrious compatriot John Adams, accompanied with the remark, that he thought it genuine; and this suggestion of Mr. Adams elicited the following reply, which was at that time published in various newspapers, and has been since given to the world in the 4th volume of Mr. Jefferson's Works, page 314:

TO JOHN ADAMS.

"Monticello, July 9, 1819.

"DEAR SIR,—I am in debt to you for your letters of May the 21st, 27th, and June the 22nd. The first, delivered me by Mr. Greenwood, gave me the gratification of his acquaintance; and a gratification it always is, to be made acquainted with gentlemen of candor, worth, and information, as I found Mr. Greenwood to be. That on the subject of Mr. Samuel Adams Wells, shall not be forgotten in time and place, when it can be used to his advantage.

"But what has attracted my peculiar notice, is the paper from Mecklenburg county, of North Carolina, published in the Essex Register, which you were so kind as to enclose in your last, of June the 22nd. And you seem to think it genuine. I believe it spurious. I deem it to be a very unjustifiable quiz, like that of the volcano, so minutely related to us as having broken out in North Carolina, some half dozen years ago, in that part of the country, and perhaps in that very county of Mecklenburg, for I do not remember its precise locality. If this paper be really taken from the Raleigh Register, as quoted, I wonder it should have escaped Richie, who culls what is good from every paper, as the bee from every flower; and the National Intelligencer, too, which is edited by a North Carolinian: and that the fire should blaze out all at once in Essex, one thousand miles from where the spark is said to have fallen. But if really taken from the Raleigh Register, who is the narrator, and is the name subscribed real, or is it as fictitious as the paper itself? It appeals, too, to an original book, which is burnt, to Mr. Alexander, who is dead, to a joint letter from Caswell, Hughes, and Hooper, all dead, to a copy sent to the dead Caswell, and another sent to Doctor Williamson, now probably dead, whose memory did not recollect, in the history he has written of North Carolina, this gigantic step of its county of Mecklenburg. Horry, too, is silent in his history of Marion, whose scene of action was the country bordering on Mecklenburg. Ramsay, Marshall, Jones, Girardin, Wirt, historians of the adjacent States, all silent. When Mr. Henry's resolutions, far short of independence, flew like lightning through every paper, and kindled both sides of the Atlantic, this flaming declaration of the same date, of the independence of Mecklenburg county, of North Carolina, absolving it from the British allegiance, and abjuring all political connection with that nation, although sent to Congress, too, is never heard of. It is not known even a

twelvemonth after, when a similar proposition is first made in that body. Armed with this bold example, would not you have addressed our timid brethren in peals of thunder, on their tardy fears? Would not every advocate of independence have rung the glories of Mecklenburg county, in North Carolina, in the ears of the doubting Dickinson and others, who hung so heavily on us? Yet the example of independent Mecklenburg county, in North Carolina, was never once quoted. The paper speaks, too, of the continued exertions of their delegation (Caswell, Hooper, Hughes,) 'in the cause of liberty and independence.' Now, you remember as well as I do, that we had not a greater tory in Congress than Hooper; that Hughes was very wavering, sometimes firm, sometimes feeble, according as the day was clear or cloudy; that Caswell, indeed, was a good whig, and kept these gentlemen to the notch, while he was present; but that he left us soon, and their line of conduct became then uncertain until Penn came, who fixed Hughes, and the vote of the State. I must not be understood as suggesting any doubtfulness in the State of North Carolina. No State was more fixed or forward. Nor do I affirm, positively, that this paper is a fabrication: because the proof of a negative can only be presumptive. But I shall believe it such until positive and solemn proof of its authenticity shall be produced. And if the name of McKnitt be real, and not a part of the fabrication, it needs a vindication by the production of such proof. For the present, I must be an unbeliever in the apocryphal gospel.

"I am glad to learn that Mr. Ticknor has safely returned to his friends; but should have been much more pleased had he accepted the Professorship in our University, which we should have offered him in form. Mr. Bowditch, too, refuses us; so fascinating is the *vinculum* of the *dulce natale solum*. Our wish is to procure natives, where they can be found, like these gentlemen, of the first order of acquirement in their respective lines; but preferring foreigners of the first order to natives of the second, we shall certainly have to go, for several of our Professors, to countries more advanced in science than we are.

"I set out within three or four days for my other home, the distance of which, and its cross mails, are great impediments to epistolary communications. I shall remain there about two months; and there, here, and every where, I am and shall always be, affectionately and respectfully yours.

"TH: JEFFERSON.

The republication of this letter in a work which is intended for, and will go down to posterity, recommended alike by its intrinsic excellence, and the illustrious name of the author, has imposed upon the Legislature the task of proving that, with regard to this particular fact, Mr. Jefferson was mistaken, and that his opinion was made up from a very superficial and inaccurate examination of the publication in the Raleigh Register, the only evidence then before him, and upon which his letter is a commentary.

The letter itself was evidently written *currente calamo*, and for that reason may not be regarded as a fair subject for severe criticism. It is not intended to subject it to such a test, nor is it designed to examine it further than may be necessary to the ascertainment of truth. Of the ability, the purity, the patriotism of the author, it is unnecessary to speak.—His love of country was not bounded by the confines of Virginia; but it is no discredit to his memory that her institutions, her heroes and her statesmen occupied the first place in his affections. She was emphatically 'the mother of great men,' and 'his own, his native land;' and it is no matter of surprize that he should be unwilling, without the most ample proof, to transfer the brightest page of her history to emblazon the records of a sister State. Mr. Wirt's Life of Patrick Henry had just been published, and for the latter was claimed the high distinction of having been the first to give motion to the ball of the Revolution. Mr. Jefferson himself was the author of the Declaration of Independence by Congress, and was not disposed to share in any degree the immortality with which it had crowned him, with a comparatively obscure citizen of North Carolina; and, therefore, the evidence which was at once satisfactory to Mr. Adams, is by him pronounced "to be a very unjustifiable quiz."

The grounds for this opinion, in the order in which they are given to Mr. Adams, are. 1. That the story is "like that of the volcano* having broken out in that part of the country, and perhaps in *that very county of Mecklenburg.*" 2. "If this paper be *really* taken from the Raleigh Register, as quoted, I wonder it should have *escaped* Richie," &c. "and that the fire should blaze out all at once in Essex, one thousand miles from where the spark is said to have fallen." 3. "But if *really* taken from the Raleigh Register, *who is the narrator*, and is the name subscribed *real*, or is it as *fictitious* as the paper itself?" 4. "It appeals, too, to an original book, which is *burnt*, to Mr. Alexander, who is *dead*, to a joint letter from Caswell, Hewes and Hooper, *all dead*, to a copy sent to the *dead* Caswell, and another sent to Doctor Williamson, *now probably dead*, whose memory did not recollect, in the history he has written of North Carolina, *this gigantic step of its county of Mecklenburg,*" &c. &c.

Without further remark with regard to the first point—the *quiz about the volcano*—or the second, whether the "spurious" paper was *really* published in the Raleigh Register, it is proper to say, in reply to the *third argument*, that the name subscribed is *real*, that the individual still lives, that he is moreover a credible witness, and that it is to his laudable attention and exertions that the State is indebted for the preservation of much of the testimony which is now offered to the public. The *fourth argument* demands, and will receive more particular attention and examination.

The paper appeals to a book, which is burnt; to Mr. Alexander, who is dead; to Messrs. Caswell, Hooper and Hewes, all dead; to a copy sent to "THE DEAD CASWELL," and another, sent to Doct. Williamson, probably dead; are the consecutive facts which Mr. Jefferson states, and on which he relies. Admit the premises, and the conclusion would be probable, though not inevitable; and a writer of much less ability, if permitted to *assume* his facts, might predicate upon them not only a very plausible, but an unanswerable argument. The very fact, however, on which Mr. Jefferson rests, as the climax of improbabilities, is not only not proved to exist, but, upon his own shewing, does not exist; and justifies the remark in the outset, that his letter was written in haste, upon a very superficial and imperfect view of the subject. The paper does not appeal "TO THE DEAD CASWELL," but to the then LIVING DAVIE, a native of the section of country in which the event occurred, like the former, a distinguished hero of the revolution, and, in every respect, a proper depository of the record. The following is the statement in question: (See the paper A.) ("The foregoing is a true copy of the papers, on the above subject, left in my hands by John McNitt Alexander, dec'd. I find it mentioned on file, that the original book was burned April, 1800. That a copy of the proceedings was sent to †Hugh Williamson, in New York, then writing a histo-

* The hoax alluded to was published in 1812, and represented the volcano as having broken out in the neighborhood of the Warm Springs, in Buncombe, a point nearly as distant from the county of Mecklenburg as from Monticello.

† This copy the writer well recollects to have seen in the possession of Doct. Williamson, in the year 1793, in Fayetteville, together with a letter to him from John McNitt Alexander, and to have conversed with him on the subject. Why it is not mentioned in his History, is not strange to any one who *knows the State*, and has *read* the book. It cannot be regarded as a *history* of any country. The memorable *Report and Resolutions* of the Congress of April, 1776, are alike unnoticed. A correct and satisfactory account of both proceedings, will be found in the last chapter of Martin's History of North Carolina.

ty of North Carolina, and that a copy was sent to Gen. W. R. DAVIE.”) Gen. *Davie* died shortly after the date of Mr. Jefferson’s letter; but this identical copy, known by the writer of these remarks to be in the handwriting of John M’Nitt Alexander, one of the Secretaries of the Mecklenburg meeting, is now in the Executive Office of this State. (See Doct. Henderson’s certificate, B.) *Caswell, Hooper and Hewes* are all dead; but Capt. Jack, who was appointed to carry to them, at Philadelphia, this Mecklenburg Declaration, lived long enough to bear testimony to the truth; and his statement (C) is circumstantial, explicit and satisfactory. If it needed confirmation, it would be found to be fully sustained by the interesting communication (D) of the late Rev. Francis Cummins, D. D. of Georgia, to the Hon. Nathaniel Macon. More satisfactory evidence, drawn from more respectable sources, Mr. Jefferson, if alive, could not, and would not require. It is not hazarding too much to say, that there is no one event of the Revolution which has been, or can be more fully or clearly authenticated.

It is, perhaps, needless to multiply proofs, or to extend this article. Col. William Polk is a resident of this city, a venerable remnant of the revolutionary stock, has passed the common boundary of human life, and in a green old age, is in the full possession of his faculties. His compatriots, *Caswell, and Hooper, and Hewes, are dead, but he lives*, was present, heard his father proclaim the Declaration to the assembled multitude; and need it be inquired, in any portion of this Union, if *he* will be believed?

The letter (E) of Gen. Joseph Graham, another surviving officer of the Revolution, a citizen and a soldier worthy of the best days of the Republic, will be read with pleasure and perfect confidence throughout the wide range of his acquaintance.

The extract from the memoir of the late Rev. Humphrey Hunter, (F) of Lincoln, is equally explicit, full and satisfactory. He, with several other respectable gentlemen, whose statements are appended, was an eye witness of what he relates; and the combined testimony of all these individuals prove the existence of the Mecklenburg Declaration, and all the circumstances connected with it, as fully and clearly as any fact can be shewn by human testimony.

The following extract from “The Journal of the Provincial Congress of North Carolina, held at Halifax, on the 4th April, 1776,” (pa. 11, 12,) shews that the first *legislative recommendation* of a DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE by the CONTINENTAL CONGRESS, originated likewise in the State of North Carolina. It is worthy of remark, that *John McNitt Alexander*, the Secretary of the meeting, *Waightstell Avery, John Pfifer* and *Robert Irwin*, who were conspicuous actors in the proceedings in Mecklenburg, were active and influential members of this Provincial Congress.

“The select committee to take into consideration the usurpations and violences attempted and committed by the King and Parliament of Britain against America, and the further measures to be taken for frustrating the same, and for the better defence of this Province, reported as follows, to wit:

“It appears to your committee, that pursuant to the plan concerted by the British Ministry for subjugating America, the King and Parliament of Great Britain have usurped a power over the persons and properties of the people unlimited and uncontrouled; and disregarding their humble petitions for peace, liberty and safety, have made divers legislative acts, denouncing war, famine, and every species of calamity, against the Continent in general. The British fleets and armies have been, and still are daily employed in destroying the people, and com-

mitting the most horrid devastations on the country. That Governors in different Colonies have declared protection to slaves, who should imbrue their hands in the blood of their masters. That the ships belonging to America are declared prizes of war, and many of them have been violently seized and confiscated. In consequence of all which multitudes of the people have been destroyed, or from easy circumstances reduced to the most lamentable distress.

"And whereas the moderation hitherto manifested by the United Colonies, and their sincere desire to be reconciled to the mother country on constitutional principles, have procured no mitigation of the aforesaid wrongs and usurpations, and no hopes remain of obtaining redress by those means alone which have been hitherto tried, your committee are of opinion that the House should enter into the following resolve, to wit:

"*Resolved*, That the DELEGATES FOR THIS COLONY IN THE CONTINENTAL CONGRESS BE IMPOWERED TO CONCUR WITH THE DELEGATES OF THE OTHER COLONIES IN DECLARING INDEPENDENCE, AND FORMING FOREIGN ALLIANCES, reserving to this Colony the sole and exclusive right of forming a Constitution and laws for this Colony, and of appointing Delegates from time to time, (under the direction of a general representation thereof,) to meet the Delegates of the other Colonies, for such purposes as shall be hereafter pointed out.

"The Congress taking the same into consideration, *unanimously* concurred therewith."

The striking similarity of expression in the concluding sentences of the Mecklenburg Declaration, and the Declaration by Congress on the 4th of July, 1776, has been repeatedly urged and relied upon as disproving the authenticity of the former. It is scarcely necessary to reply to this suggestion. It is not very strange that men who think alike should speak alike upon the same subject, more especially when high toned patriotic feeling seeks for utterance. This similarity of expression is not confined, however, to these two papers. A comparison of the foregoing resolutions with the Declaration, as drawn by Mr. Jefferson, will satisfy the most credulous upon this subject. Who suspects Mr. Jefferson of intentional plagiarism? and yet he might be charged with having appropriated the language of the Provincial Legislature, with at least as much propriety as Mr. Alexander with having *forged* the Mecklenburg Declaration. The sentiments embodied by Mr. Jefferson were not peculiar to himself, but adopted by him as expressive of the common feeling in the common language of that eventful period.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

AND

ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS.

REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS,

Adopted by the General Assembly at the session of 1830-'31, upon which this publication is predicated.

The committee to whom it was referred to examine, collate and arrange in proper order such parts of the Journals of the Provincial Assemblies of North Carolina, as relate to the Declaration of American Independence; also such documents as relate to the Declaration of Independence made by the patriotic men of Mecklenburg in May, 1775; and also such measures as relate to the same cause, adopted by the freemen of Cumberland county, previous to the fourth of July, 1776, in order to the publication and distribution of such documents, having performed the duty assigned them, respectfully report:

That upon an attentive examination of the Journals of the Provincial Assembly of North Carolina, which met at Halifax in the month of April, 1776, the committee are of opinion, that no selection could be made from the said Journal to answer the purpose of the House. But as every thing relating to that period, must be interesting to those who value the blessing of national independence, the committee recommend that the whole of the Journal be printed, and receive the same extended distribution which the resolution of the House contemplates for the proceedings in Mecklenburg and Cumberland. This course is deemed by the committee the more proper, because the Journal is now out of print, and it is highly probable that the copy in the possession of the committee is the only one now extant.

Your committee have also examined, collated and arranged, all the documents which have been accessible to them, touching the Declaration of Independence by the citizens of Mecklenburg, and the proceedings of the freemen of Cumberland.

By the publication of these papers, it will be fully verified, that as early as the month of May, 1775, a portion of the people of North Carolina, sensible that their wrongs could no longer be borne, without sacrificing both safety and honor, and that redress so often sought, so patiently waited for, and so cruelly delayed, was no longer to be expected, did, by a public and solemn act, declare the dissolution of the ties which bound them to the crown and people of Great Britain, and did establish an independent, though temporary government for their own control and direction.

This first claim of Independence evinces such high sentiments of valor and patriotism, that we cannot, and ought not lightly to esteem the honor

of having made it. The fact of the Declaration should be announced, its language should be published and perpetuated, and the names of the gallant representatives of Mecklenburg, with whom it originated, should be preserved from an oblivion, which, should it involve them, would as much dishonor us, as injure them. If the thought of Independence did not first occur to them, to them, at least, belongs the proud distinction of having first given language to the thought; and it should be known, and, fortunately, it can still be conclusively established, that the revolution received its first impulse towards Independence, however feeble that impulse might have been, in North Carolina. The committee are aware that this assertion has elsewhere been received with doubt, and at times met with denial; and it is, therefore, believed to be more strongly incumbent upon the House to usher to the world the Mecklenburg Declaration, accompanied with such testimonials of its genuineness, as shall silence incredulity, and with such care for its general diffusion, as shall forever secure it from being forgotten. And in recounting the causes, the origin and the progress of our revolutionary struggle, till its final issue in acknowledged independence, whatever the brilliant achievements of other States may have been, let it never be forgotten, that at a period of darkness and oppression, without concert with others, without assurances of support from any quarter, a few gallant North Carolinians, all fear of consequences lost in a sense of their country's wrongs, relying, under Heaven, solely upon themselves, nobly dared to assert, and resolved to maintain that independence, of which, whoever might have thought, none had then spoken; and thus earned for themselves, and for their fellow-citizens of North Carolina, the honor of giving birth to the first Declaration of Independence.

The committee respectfully recommend the adoption of the following resolutions.

All of which is submitted.

THOS. G. POLK, Chr'n
JOHN BRAGG,
EVAN ALEXANDER,
LOUIS D. HENRY,
ALEX. M'NEILL.

Resolved, That his Excellency the Governor be directed to cause to be published in pamphlet form the above Report and the accompanying documents, in the manner and order following, viz. After the Report, first, the Mecklenburg Declaration, with the names of the Delegates composing the meeting; second, the Certificates, testifying to the circumstances attending the Declaration; third, the proceedings of the Cumberland Association; and that he be further directed to have reprinted in like manner, separate and distinct from the above, the accompanying Journal of the Provincial Assembly, held at Halifax in one thousand seven hundred and seventy-six.

Resolved further, That after publication, the Governor be instructed to distribute said documents as follows, to wit: Twenty copies of each to the Library of the State; to each of the Libraries at the University, ten copies; to the Library of the Congress of the United States, ten copies; and one copy to each of the Executives of the several States of the Union.

DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE.

May 20, 1775.

NAMES OF THE DELEGATES PRESENT.

Col. Thomas Polk,	John M'Knitt Alexander,
Ephraim Brevard,	Hezekiah Alexander,
Hezekiah J. Balch,	Adam Alexander,
John Phifer,	Charles Alexander,
James Harris,	Zacheus Wilson, Sen.
William Kennon,	Waightstill Avery,
John Ford,	Benjamin Patton,
Richard Barry,	Matthew M'Clure,
Henry Downs,	Neil Morrison,
Ezra Alexander,	Robert Irwin,
William Graham,	John Flenniken,
John Queary,	David Reese,
Abraham Alexander,	Richard Harris, Sen.

ABRAHAM ALEXANDER was appointed Chairman, and JOHN M'KNITT ALEXANDER Clerk. The following resolutions were offered, viz.

1st. *Resolved*, That whosoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form or manner, countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country, to America, and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

2d. *Resolved*, That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, or association, with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3d. *Resolved*, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing Association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the general government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

4th. *Resolved*, That as we now acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal officer, civil or military, within this county, we do hereby ordain and adopt as a rule of life, all, each and every of our former laws,—wherein, nevertheless, the crown of Great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities or authority therein.

5th. *Resolved*, That it is further decreed, that all, each and every military officer in this county, is hereby reinstated in his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present, of this delegation, shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz. a Justice of the Peace, in the character of a “Committee-man,” to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws, and to preserve peace, union and harmony in said county;—and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom.

throughout America, until a more general and organized government be established in this province.

After discussing the foregoing resolves, and arranging bye-laws and regulations for the government of a Standing Committee of Public Safety, who were selected from these delegates, the whole proceedings were unanimously adopted and signed. A select committee was then appointed to draw a more full and definite statement of grievances, and a more formal declaration of independence. The Delegation then adjourned about 2 o'clock, A. M. May 20.

FROM THE RALEIGH REGISTER, OF APRIL 30, 1819.

It is not probably known to many of our readers, that the citizens of Mecklenburg county, in this State, made a Declaration of Independence more than a year before Congress made theirs. The following Document on the subject has lately come to the hands of the Editor from unquestionable authority, and is published that it may go down to posterity.

NORTH CAROLINA, MECKLENBURG COUNTY, }
May 20, 1775. }

In the spring of 1775, the leading characters of Mecklenburg county, stimulated by that enthusiastic patriotism which elevates the mind above considerations of individual aggrandizement, and scorning to shelter themselves from the impending storm by submission to lawless power, &c. &c. held several detached meetings, in each of which the individual sentiments were, "that the cause of Boston was the cause of all; that their destinies were indissolubly connected with those of their Eastern fellow-citizens—and that they must either submit to all the impositions which an unprincipled, and to them an unrepresented, Parliament might impose—or support their brethren who were doomed to sustain the first shock of that power, which, if successful there, would ultimately overwhelm all in the common calamity." Conformably to these principles, Colonel T. Polk, through solicitation, issued an order to each Captain's company in the county of Mecklenburg, (then comprising the present county of Cabarrus,) directing each militia company to elect two persons, and delegate to them ample power to devise ways and means to aid and assist their suffering brethren in Boston, and also generally to adopt measures to extricate themselves from the impending storm, and to secure unimpaired their inalienable rights, privileges and liberties, from the dominant grasp of British imposition and tyranny.

In conformity to said order, on the 19th of May, 1775, the said delegation met in Charlotte, vested with unlimited powers; at which time official news, by express, arrived of the battle of Lexington on that day of the preceding month. Every delegate felt the value and importance of the prize, and the awful and solemn crisis which had arrived—every bosom swelled with indignation at the malice, inveteracy, and insatiable revenge, developed in the late attack at Lexington. The universal sentiment was: let us not flatter ourselves that popular harangues, or resolves; that popular vapour will avert the storm, or vanquish our common enemy—let us deliberate—let us calculate the issue—the probable result; and then let us act with energy, as brethren leagued to preserve our property—our lives—and what is still more endearing, the liberties of America. *Abraham Alexander* was then elected Chairman, and *John M'Knitt Alexander*, Clerk. After a free and full discussion of the various objects for which the delegation had been convened, it was unanimously ordained—

1. *Resolved*, That whoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form, or manner, countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country—to America—and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

2. *Resolved*, That we the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the Mother Country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, or association, with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties—and inhumanly shed the innocent blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3. *Resolved*, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people, are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-governing Association, under the control of no power other than that of our God and the General Government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other, our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

4. *Resolved*, That as we now acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal officer, civil or military, within this county, we do hereby ordain and adopt, as a rule of life, all, each and every of our former laws, wherein, nevertheless, the Crown of Great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities, or authority therein.

5. *Resolved*, That it is also further decreed, that all, each and every military officer in this county, is hereby reinstated to his former command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present of this delegation shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz. a Justice of the Peace, in the character of a '*Committee-man*,' to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws, and to preserve peace, and union, and harmony, in said county,—and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America, until a more general and organized government be established in this province.

A number of bye laws were also added, merely to protect the association from confusion, and to regulate their general conduct as citizens. After sitting in the Court House all night, neither sleepy, hungry, nor fatigued, and after discussing every paragraph, they were all passed, sanctioned, and decreed, *unanimously*, about 2 o'clock, A. M. May 20. In a few days, a deputation of said delegation convened, when C. J. *James Jack*, of Charlotte, was deputed as express to the Congress at Philadelphia, with a copy of said Resolves and Proceedings, together with a letter addressed to our three representatives there, viz. *Richard Caswell, William Hooper and Joseph Hughes*—under express injunction, personally, and through the State representation, to use all possible means to have said proceedings sanctioned and approved by the General Congress. On the return of Captain Jack, the delegation learned that their proceedings were individually approved by the Members of Congress, but that it was deemed premature to lay them before the House. A joint letter from said three members of Congress was also received, complimentary of the zeal in the common cause, and recommending perseverance, order and energy.

The subsequent harmony, unanimity, and exertion in the cause of liberty and independence, evidently resulting from these regulations, and the continued exertion of said delegation, apparently tranquilised this section of the State, and met with the concurrence and high approbation of the Council of Safety, who held their sessions at Newbern and Wil-

ington, alternately, and who confirmed the nomination and acts of the delegation in their official capacity.

From this delegation originated the Court of Enquiry of this county, who constituted and held their first session in Charlotte—they then held their meetings regularly at Charlotte, at Col. James Harris's, and at Col. Phifer's, alternately, one week at each place. It was a Civil Court founded on military process. Before this Judicature, all suspicious persons were made to appear, who were formally tried and banished, or continued under guard. Its jurisdiction was as unlimited as toryism, and its decrees as final as the confidence and patriotism of the county. Several were arrested and brought before them from Lincoln, Rowan and the adjacent counties.

[The foregoing is a true copy of the papers on the above subject, left in my hands by John M'Knitt Alexander, dec'd. I find it mentioned on file that the original book was burned April, 1800. That a copy of the proceedings was sent to Hugh Williamson, in New York, then writing a History of North Carolina, and that a copy was sent to Gen. W. R. Davie.

J. M'KNITT.]



B

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, }
MECKLENBURG COUNTY. }

I, Samuel Henderson, do hereby certify, that the paper annexed was obtained by me from Maj. William Davie in its present situation, soon after the death of his father, Gen. William R. Davie, and given to Doct. Joseph M'Knitt by me. In searching for some particular paper, I came across this, and, knowing the hand writing of John M'Knitt Alexander, took it up, and examined it. Maj. Davie said to me (when asked how it became torn) his sisters had torn it, not knowing what it was.

Given under my hand, this 25th Nov. 1830.

SAM. HENDERSON.

[NOTE.—To this certificate of Doct. Henderson is annexed the copy of the paper A, originally deposited by John M'Knitt Alexander in the hands of *Gen. Davie*, whose name seems to have been mistaken by Mr. Jefferson for that of *Gov. Caswell*. See preface, pages v & vi. This paper is somewhat torn, but is entirely legible, and constitutes the "solemn and positive proof of authenticity" which Mr. Jefferson required, and which would doubtless have been satisfactory, had it been submitted to him.]

CAPTAIN JACK'S CERTIFICATE.

Having seen in the newspapers some pieces respecting the Declaration of Independence by the people of Mecklenburg county, in the State of North Carolina, in May, 1775, and being solicited to state what I know of that transaction; I would observe, that for some time previous to, and at the time those resolutions were agreed upon, I resided in the town of Charlotte, Mecklenburg county; was privy to a number of meetings of some of the most influential and leading characters of that county on the subject, before the final adoption of the resolutions—and at the time they were adopted; among those who appeared to take the lead, may be mentioned Hezekiah Alexander, who generally acted as Chairman, John M'Knitt Alexander, as Secretary, Abraham Alexander, Adam Alexander, Maj. John Davidson, Maj. (afterwards) Gen. Wm. Davidson, Col. Thomas Polk, Ezekiel Polk, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, Samuel Martin, Duncan Ochle-tree, William Willson, Robert Irvin.

When the resolutions were finally agreed on, they were publicly proclaimed from the court-house door in the town of Charlotte, and received with every demonstration of joy by the inhabitants.

I was then solicited to be the bearer of the proceedings to Congress. I set out the following month, say June, and in passing through Salisbury, the General Court was sitting—at the request of the court I handed a copy of the resolutions to Col. Kennon, an Attorney, and they were read aloud in open court. Major William Davidson, and Mr. Avery, an attorney, called on me at my lodgings the evening after, and observed, they had heard of but one person, (a Mr. Beard) but approved of them.

I then proceeded on to Philadelphia, and delivered the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence of May, 1775, to Richard Caswell and William Hooper, the Delegates to Congress from the State of North-Carolina.

I am now in the eighty-eighth year of my age, residing in the county of Elbert, in the State of Georgia. I was in the Revolutionary War, from the commencement to the close. I would further observe, that the Rev. Francis Cummins, a Presbyterian Clergyman, of Greene county, in this State, was a student in the town of Charlotte at the time of the adoption of the resolutions, and is as well, or perhaps better acquainted with the proceedings at that time, than any man now living.

Col. William Polk, of Raleigh, in North-Carolina, was living with his father Thomas, in Charlotte, at the time I have been speaking of, and although then too young to be forward in the business, yet the leading circumstances I have related cannot have escaped his recollection.

JAMES JACK.

Signed this 7th Dec. 1819, in presence of
 JOB WESTON, C. C. O.
 JAMES OLIVER, Atto. at Law.

We, the undersigned, do hereby certify that we have frequently heard William S. Alexander, dec'd, say that he, the said Wm. S. Alexander, was at Philadelphia, on mercantile business, in the early part of the summer of 1775, say in June; and that on the day that Gen. Washington left Philadelphia to take the command of the Northern army, he, the said Wm. S. Alexander, met with Capt. James Jack, who informed him, the said William S. Alexander, that he, the said James Jack, was there as the agent or bearer of the Declaration of Independence made in Charlotte, on the twentieth day of May, seventeen hundred and seventy-five, by the citizens of Mecklenburg, then including Cabarrus, with instructions to present the same to the Delegates from North Carolina, and by them to be laid before Congress, and which he said he had done; in which Declaration the aforesaid citizens of Mecklenburg renounced their allegiance to the crown of Great Britain, and set up a government for themselves, under the title of The Committee of Safety.

ALPHONSO ALEXANDER,
AMOS ALEXANDER,
J. MCKNITT.

ב

DEAR SIR,—The bearer, the Hon. Thomas W. Cobb, has suggested to me that you had a desire to know something particularly of the proceedings of the citizens of Mecklenburg county, in North-Carolina, about the beginning of our Revolutionary War.

Previous to my becoming more particular, I will suppose you remember the Regulation business, which took its rise in or before the year 1770, and issued and ended in a battle between the Regulators and Governor Tryon, in the spring of 1771. Some of the Regulators were killed, and the whole dispersed. The Regulators' conduct "was a *rudis indigestaque moles*," as Ovid says, about the beginning of creation; but the embryotic principles of the Revolution were in their temper and views. They wanted strength, consistency, a Congress and a Washington at their head. Tryon sent his officers and minions through the State, and imposed the oath of allegiance upon the people, even as far up as Mecklenburg county. In the year 1775, after our Revolution began, the principal characters of Mecklenburg county met on two sundry days, in Queen's Museum in Charlotte, to digest Articles for a State Constitution, in anticipation that the Province would proceed to do so. In this business the leading characters were, the Rev. He-

Zeekiah James Bald, a graduate of Princeton College, an elegant scholar; Waitstill Avery, Esq. Attorney at Law; Hezekiah and John McKnight Alexander, Esqrs. Col. Thomas Polk, &c. &c.

Many men, and young men, (myself one) before magistrates, abjured allegiance to George III, or any other foreign power. At length, in the same year, 1775, I think at least positively before July 4th, 1776, the males generally of that county, met on a certain day in Charlotte, and from the head of the court-house stairs proclaimed Independence on English Government, by their herald Col. Thomas Polk. I was present, and saw and heard it, and as a young man, and then a student in Queen's Museum, was an agent in these things. I did not then take and keep the dates, and cannot, as to date, be so particular as I could wish. Capt. James Jack, then of Charlotte, but now of Elbert county, in Georgia, was sent with the account of these proceedings to Congress, then in Philadelphia—and brought back to the county, the thanks of Congress for their zeal—and the advice of Congress to be a little more patient, until Congress should take the measures thought to be best.

I would suppose, sir, that some minutes of these things must be found among the records of the first Congress, that would perfectly settle their dates. I am perfectly sure, being present at the whole of them, they were before our National Declaration of Independence.

Hon. Sir, if the above few things can afford you any gratification, it will add to the happiness of your friend and humble servant.

FRANCIS CUMMINS.

HON. NATHANIEL MAZON.

— 1836 —

II

Vesuvius Furnace, 4th October, 1836.

DEAR SIR,—Agreeably to your request, I will give you the details of the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence on the 20th of May, 1775, as well as I can recollect after a lapse of fifty-five years. I was then a lad about half grown, was present on that occasion (a looker on.)

During the Winter and Spring preceding that event, several popular meetings of the people were held in Charlotte; two of which I attended.—Papers were read, grievances stated, and public measures discussed. As printing was not then common in the South, the papers were mostly manuscript; one or more of which was from the pen of the Reverend Doctor Reese, (then of Mecklenburg,) which met with general approbation, and copies of it circulated. It is to be regretted that those and other papers published at that period, and the journal of their proceedings, are lost.—They would show much of the spirit and tone of thinking which prepared them for the measures they afterwards adopted.

On the 20th of May, 1775, besides the two persons elected from each militia company, (usually called Committee-men,) a much larger number of citizens attended in Charlotte than at any former meeting—perhaps half

the men in the county. The news of the battle of Lexington, the 19th of April preceding, had arrived. There appeared among the people much excitement. The committee were organized in the court house by appointing Abraham Alexander, Esq. Chairman, and John M'Kitt Alexander, Esq. Clerk or Secretary to the meeting.

After reading a number of papers as usual, and much animated discussion, the question was taken, and they resolved to declare themselves independent. One among other reasons offered, that the King or Ministry had, by proclamation or some edict, declared the Colonies out of the protection of the British Crown; they ought, therefore, to declare themselves out of his protection, and resolve on independence. That their proceedings might be in due form, a sub-committee, consisting of Doctor Ephraim Brevard, a Mr. Kennon, an attorney, and a third person, whom I do not recollect, were appointed to draft their Declaration. They retired from the court house for some time; but the committee continued in session in it. One circumstance occurred I distinctly remember: A member of the committee, who had said but little before, addressed the Chairman as follows: "If you resolve on independence, how shall we all be absolved from the obligations of the oath we took to be true to King George the 3d about four years ago, after the Regulation battle, when we were, sworn whole militia companies together. I should be glad to know how gentlemen can clear their consciences after taking that oath." This speech produced confusion. The Chairman could scarcely preserve order, so many wished to reply. There appeared great indignation and contempt at the speech of the member. Some said it was nonsense; others that allegiance and protection were reciprocal; when protection was withdrawn, allegiance ceased; that the oath was only binding while the King protected us in the enjoyment of our rights and liberties as they existed at the time it was taken; which he had not done, but now declared us out of his protection; therefore was not binding. Any man who would interpret it otherwise, was a fool. By way of illustration, (pointing to a green tree near the court house,) stated, if he was sworn to do any thing as long as the leaves continued on that tree, it was so long binding; but when the leaves fell, he was discharged from its obligation. This was said to be certainly applicable in the present case. Out of respect for a worthy citizen, long since deceased, and his respectable connexions, I forbear to mention names; for, though he was a friend to the cause, a suspicion rested on him in the public mind for some time after.

The sub-committee appointed to draft the resolutions returned, and Doctor Ephraim Brevard read their report, as near as I can recollect, in the very words we have since seen them several times in print. It was unanimously adopted, and shortly after it was moved and seconded to have proclamation made and the people collected, that the proceedings be read at the court house door, in order that all might hear them. It was done, and they were received with enthusiasm. It was then proposed by some one aloud to give three cheers and throw up their hats. It was immediately adopted, and the hats thrown. Several of them lit on the court house roof. The owners had some difficulty to reclaim them.

The foregoing is all from personal knowledge. I understood afterwards that Captain James Jack, then of Charlotte, undertook, on the request of the committee, to carry a copy of their proceedings to Congress, which

then sat in Philadelphia; and on his way, at Salisbury, the time of court, Mr. Kennon, who was one of the committee who assisted in drawing the Declaration, prevailed on Captain Jack to get his papers, and have them read publicly; which was done, and the proceedings met with general approbation. But two of the Lawyers, John Dunn and a Mr. Booth, dissented, and asserted they were treasonable, and endeavored to have Captain Jack detained. He drew his pistols, and threatened to kill the first man who would interrupt him, and passed on. The news of this reached Charlotte in a short time after, and the executive of the committee, whom they had invested with suitable powers, ordered a party of ten or twelve armed horsemen to bring said Lawyers from Salisbury; when they were brought, and the case investigated before the committee. Dunn, on giving security and making fair promises, was permitted to return, and Booth was sentenced to go to Camden, in South Carolina, out of the sphere of his influence. My brother George Graham and the late Col. John Carruth were of the party that went to Salisbury; and it is distinctly remembered that when in Charlotte they came home at night, in order to provide for their trip to Camden; and that they and two others of the party took Booth to that place. This was the first military expedition from Mecklenburg in the Revolutionary war, and believed to be the first any where to the South.

Yours respectfully.

J. GRAHAM.

Dr. Jos. M'Kt. ALEXANDER.

Mecklenburg, N. Carolina.

—*—*—*—

F

EXTRACT FROM THE MEMOIR OF THE LATE REV. HUMPHREY HUNTER

Orders were presently issued by Col. Thos. Polk to the several militia companies, that two men, selected from each corps, should meet at the Court-House on the 19th of May, 1775, in order to consult with each other upon such measures as might be thought best to be pursued. Accordingly, on said day a far larger number than two out of each company were present. There was some difficulty in choosing the commissioners. To have chosen all thought to be worthy, would have rendered the meeting too numerous. The following were selected, and styled Delegates, and are here given, according to my best recollection, as they were placed on roll: Abram Alexander, sen'r, Thomas Polk, Rich'd Harris, sen'r. Adam Alexander, Richard Barry, John M'Knit Alexander, Neil Morison, Hezekiah Alexander, Hezekiah J. Balch, Zacheus Wilson, John Phifer, James Harris, William Kennon, John Ford, Henry Downs, Ezra Alexander, William Graham, John Queary, Chas. Alexander, Waitstill Avery, Ephraim Brevard, Benjamin Patton, Matthew M'Clure, Robert Irwin, John Fleniken, and David Reese.

Abram Alexander was nominated, and unanimously voted to the Chair:

John M'Knitt Alexander and Ephraim Brevard were chosen Secretaries. The Chair being occupied, and the Clerks seated, the House was called to order and proceeded to business. Then a full, a free, and dispassionate discussion obtained on the various subjects for which the delegation had been convened, and the following resolutions were unanimously ordained.

1st. *Resolved*, That whosoever directly or indirectly abetted, or in any way, form or manner, countenanced the unchartered and dangerous invasion of our rights, as claimed by Great Britain, is an enemy to this country, to America, and to the inherent and inalienable rights of man.

2d. *Resolved*, That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contract, or association, with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

3d. *Resolved*, That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought to be, a ~~severeign~~ ^{sovereign} and self-governing Association, under the control of no power other ^{than} that of our God and the general government of the Congress; to the maintenance of which independence, we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual co-operation, our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.

4th. *Resolved*, That as we now acknowledge the existence and control of no law or legal officer, civil or military, within this county, we do hereby ordain and adopt as a rule of life, all, each and every of our former laws,—wherein, nevertheless, the crown of Great Britain never can be considered as holding rights, privileges, immunities or authority therein.

5th. *Resolved*, That it is further decreed, that all, each and every military officer in this county, is hereby reinstated in ~~his~~ ^{his former} command and authority, he acting conformably to these regulations. And that every member present, of this delegation, shall henceforth be a civil officer, viz. a Justice of the Peace, in the character of a "*Committee-man*," to issue process, hear and determine all matters of controversy, according to said adopted laws, and to preserve peace, union and harmony in said county;—and to use every exertion to spread the love of country and fire of freedom throughout America, until a more general and organized government be established in this province.

Those resolves having been concurred in, bye-laws and regulations for the government of a standing Committee of Public Safety were enacted and acknowledged. Then a select committee was appointed, to report on the ensuing day a full and definite statement of grievances, together with a more correct and formal draft of the Declaration of Independence. The proceedings having been thus arranged and somewhat in readiness for promulgation, the Delegation then adjourned until to-morrow, at 12 o'clock.

The 20th of May, at 12 o'clock, the Delegation, as above, had convened. The select committee were also present, and reported agreeably to instructions, viz. a statement of grievances and formal draft of the Declaration of Independence, written by Ephraim Brevard, chairman of said committee, and read by him to the Delegation. The resolves, bye-laws and regulations were read by John M'Knitt Alexander. It was then announced from the Chair, are you all agreed? There was not a dissenting voice. Finally, the whole proceedings were read distinctly and audibly,

at the Court-House door, by Col. Thomas Polk, to a large, respectable and approving assemblage of citizens, who were present, and gave sanction to the business of the day. A copy of all those transactions were then drawn off, and given in charge to Capt. James Jack, then of Charlotte, that he should present them to Congress, then in session in Philadelphia.

On that memorable day, I was 26 years and 14 days of age, a very deeply interested spectator, recollecting the dire hand of oppression that had driven me from my native clime, now pursuing me in this happy asylum, and seeking to bind again in the fetters of bondage.

On the return of Capt. Jack, he reported that Congress, individually, manifested their entire approbation of the conduct of the Mecklenburg citizens; but deemed it premature to lay them officially before the House.

NOTE.—The foregoing extract is copied from a manuscript account of the Revolutionary War in the South, addressed by the writer to a friend, who had requested historical information upon this subject. Mr. Hunter was in the battle of Camden, and has given an interesting narrative of the circumstances connected with the death of Baron De Kalb. The manuscript gives the biography of the writer, from which it appears he was a native of Ireland, and born on the 14th of May, 1755, and at an early age emigrated from his native land to the Province of North Carolina.

ADDITIONAL PAPERS,

NOT PARTICULARLY REFERRED TO IN THE PREFACE.

FROM THE RALEIGH REGISTER, OF FEBRUARY 18, 1830.

MECKLENBURG DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

When this Declaration was first published in April last, some doubts were expressed in the Eastern papers as to its authenticity, (none of the Histories of the Revolution having noticed the circumstance.) Col. William Polk, of this City, (who, though a mere youth at the time, was present at the meeting which made the Declaration, and whose Father being Colonel of the county, appears to have acted a conspicuous part on the occasion,) observing this, assured us of the correctness of the facts generally, though he thought there were errors as to the name of the Secretary, &c. and said that he should probably be able to correct these, and throw some further light on the subject, by enquiries amongst some of his old friends in Mecklenburg county. He has accordingly made enquiries, and communicated to us the following Documents as the result, which, we presume, will do away all doubts on the subject.

CERTIFICATE.

STATE OF NORTH-CAROLINA, }
MECKLENBURG COUNTY. }

At the request of Col. William Polk, of Raleigh, made to Major-General George Graham, soliciting him to procure all the information that could be obtained at this late period, of the transactions which took place in the county of Mecklenburg, in the year 1775, as it respected the people of that county having declared Independence; of the time when the Declaration was made; who were the principal movers and leaders, and the members who composed the body of Patriots who made the Declaration, and signed the same.

We, the undersigned citizens of the said county, and of the several ages set forth opposite to each of our names, do certify, and on our honor declare, that we were present in the town of Charlotte, in the said county of Mecklenburg, on the 19th day of May, 1775, when two persons elected from each Captain's Company in said county, appeared as Delegates, to take into consideration the state of the country, and to adopt such measures as to them seemed best, to secure their lives, liberty, and property, from the storm which was gathering, and had burst upon their fellow-citizens to the Eastward, by a British Army, under the authority of the British King and Parliament.

The order for the election of Delegates was given by Col. Thomas Polk, the commanding officer of the militia of the county, with a request that their powers should be ample, touching any measure that should be proposed.

We do further certify and declare, that to the best of our recollection and belief, the delegation was complete from every company, and that the meeting took place in the Court-House, about 12 o'clock on the said 19th day of May, 1775, when *Abraham Alexander* was chosen Chairman, and *Dr. Ephraim Brevard* Secretary. That the Delegates continued in session until in the night of that day; that on the 20th they again met, when a committee, under the direction of the Delegates, had formed several resolves, which were read, and which went to declare themselves, and the people of Mecklenburg county, Free and Independent of the King and Parliament of Great Britain—and that from that day thenceforth, all allegiance and po-

political relation was absolved between the good people of Mecklenburg, and the King of Great Britain; which Declaration was signed by every member of the Delegation, under the shouts and huzzas of a very large assembly of the people of the county, who had come to know the issue of the meeting. We further believe, that the Declaration of Independence was drawn up by the Secretary, Dr. Ephraim Brevard, and that it was conceived and brought about through the instrumentality and popularity of Col. Thomas Polk, Abraham Alexander, John M'Kitt Alexander, Adam Alexander, Ephraim Brevard, John Phifer, and Hezekiah Alexander, with some others.

We do further certify and declare, that in a few days after the Delegates adjourned, Captain James Jack, of the town of Charlotte, was engaged to carry the resolves to the President of Congress, and to our Representatives—one copy for each; and that his expenses were paid by a voluntary subscription. And we do know that Captain Jack executed the trust, and returned with answers, both from the President and our Delegates in Congress, expressive of their entire approbation of the course that had been adopted, recommending a continuance in the same; and that the time would soon be, when the whole Continent would follow our example.

We further certify and declare, that the measures which were adopted at the time before mentioned, had a general influence on the people of this county to unite them in the cause of liberty and the country, at that time; that the same unanimity and patriotism continued unimpaired to the close of the war; and that the resolutions had considerable effect in harmonising the people in two or three adjoining counties.

That a committee of Safety for the county were elected, who were clothed with civil and military power, and under their authority several disaffected persons in Rowan, and Tryon (now Lincoln county,) were sent for, examined, and conveyed (after it was satisfactorily proven they were inimical) to Camden, in South Carolina, for safe-keeping.

We do further certify, that the acts passed by the committee of Safety, were received as the Civil Law of the land in many cases, and that Courts of Justice for the decision of controversies between the people were held, and we have no recollection that dissatisfaction existed in any instance with regard to the judgments of said courts.

We are not, at this late period, able to give the names of all the Delegation who formed the Declaration of Independence; but can safely declare as to the following persons being of the number, viz. Thomas Polk, Abraham Alexander, John M'Kitt Alexander, Adam Alexander, Ephraim Brevard, John Phifer, Hezekiah James Balsh, Benjamin Patton, Hezekiah Alexander, Richard Barry, William Graham, Matthew M'Clure, Robert Irwin, Zachias Wilson, Neil Morrison, John Flenniken, John Queary, Ezra Alexander.

In testimony of all and every part herein set forth, we have hereunto set our hands.

GEO. GRAHAM, aged 61, near 62.
WM. HUTCHINSON, 68.
JONAS CLARK, 61.
ROBT ROBINSON. 68.

“Providence, January 20, 1820.

“DEAR SIR,—After considerable delay, occasioned partly to obtain what information I could, in addition to my own knowledge of the facts in relation to our Declaration of Independence, and partly by a precarious, feeble old age, I now write to you in answer to yours of the 24th ult.

“I have conversed with many of my old friends and others, and all agree in the point, but few can state the particulars; for although our county is renowned for general intelligence, we have still some that don't read the public prints. You know, in the language of the day, every Province had its Congress, and Mecklenburg had its county Congress, as legally chosen as any other, and assumed an attitude until then without a precedent; but, alas! those worthies who conceived and executed that bold measure, are no more; and one reason why so little new light can be thrown on an old truth, may be this—and I appeal to yourself for the correctness of the remark—we who are now called Revolutionary men, were then thoughtless, precipitate youths; we cared not who conceived the bold act, our business was to adopt and support it. Yourself, sir, in your eighteenth year and on the spot, your worthy father, the most popular and influential character in the county, and yet you cannot state much from recollection. Your father, as commanding officer of the county, issued orders to the Captains to appoint two men from each company to represent them in the committee.—It was done. Neill Morrison, John Flennikin, from this company; Charles Alexander, John M'Knitt Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, Abraham Alexander, Esq. John Phifer, David Reese, Adam Alexander, Dickey Barry, John Queary, with others, whose names I cannot obtain. As to the names of those who drew up the Declaration, I am inclined to think Doctor Brevard was the principal, from his known talents in composition. It was, however, in substance and form, like that great national act agreed on thirteen months after. Ours was towards the close of May, 1775. In addition to what I have said, the same committee appointed three men to secure all the military stores for the county's use—Thomas Polk, John Phifer, and Joseph Kennedy. I was under arms near the head of the line, near Col. Polk, and heard him distinctly read a long string of Grievances, the Declaration and Military Order above. I likewise heard Col. Polk have two warm disputes with two men of the county, who said the measures were rash and unnecessary. He was applauded and they silenced. I was then in my 22d year, an enemy to usurpation and tyranny of every kind, with a retentive memory, and fond of liberty, that had a doubt arisen in my mind that the act would be controverted, proof would not have been wanting; but I comfort myself that none but the self-important peace-party and blue-lights of the East, will have the assurance to oppose it any further. The biographer of Patrick Henry (Mr. Wirt) says he first suggested Independence in the Virginia Convention; but it is known they did not reduce it to action—so that it will pass for nothing. The Courts likewise acted independently. I myself heard a dispute take place on the bench, and an acting magistrate was actually taken and sent to prison by an order of the Chairman,

"Thus, sir, have I thrown together all that I can at this time. I am too blind to write fair, and too old to write much sense—but if my deposition before the Supreme Court of the United States would add more weight to a truth so well known here, it should be at the service of my fellow-citizens of the county and State generally.

"I am, sir, your friend and humble servant,

"JOHN SIMESON, Sen.

P. S. I will give you a short anecdote. An aged man near me, on being asked if he knew any thing of this affair, replied, "*Och, aye, Tam Polk declared Independence long before any body else.*" This old man is 81



CERTIFICATE OF ISAAC ALEXANDER

I hereby certify that I was present in Charlotte on the 19th and 20th days of May, 1775, when a regular deputation from all the Captains' companies of militia in the county of Mecklenburg, to wit: Cel. Thomas Polk, Adam Alexander, Lieut. Col. Abram Alexander, John M'Knitt Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, Ephraim Brevard and a number of others, who met to consult and take measures for the peace and tranquillity of the citizens of said county, and who appointed Abraham Alexander their Chairman, and Doctor Ephraim Brevard Secretary; who, after due consultation, declared themselves absolved from their allegiance to the King of Great Britain, and drew up a Declaration of their Independence, which was unanimously adopted; and employed Capt. James Jack to carry copies thereof to Congress, who accordingly went. These are a part of the transactions that took place at that time, as far as my recollection serves me.

ISAAC ALEXANDER.

October 8, 1880.



CERTIFICATE OF SAM'L WILSON

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA, }
MECKLENBURG COUNTY. }

I do hereby certify, that in May, 1775, a committee or delegation from the different militia companies in this county, met in Charlotte; and after consulting together, they publicly declared their independence on Great Britain, and on her Government. This was done before a large collection of people, who highly approved of it. I was then and there present, and heard it read from the Court House door. Certified by me.

SAM'L WILSON.

Beaver Dam, October 5, 1830.

DEAR SIR,—I received your note of the 25th of last month, requiring information relative to the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence. As I am, perhaps, the only person living, who was a member of that Convention, and being far advanced in years, and not having my mind frequently directed to that circumstance for some years, I can give you but a very succinct history of that transaction. There were two men chosen from each Captain's company, to meet in Charlotte, to take the subject into consideration. John M'Knitt Alexander and myself were chosen from one company; and many other members were there that I now recollect, whose names I deem unnecessary to mention. When the members met, and were perfectly organized for business, a motion was made to declare ourselves independent of the Crown of Great Britain, which was carried by a large majority. Dr. Ephraim Brevard was then appointed to give us a sketch of the Declaration of Independence, which he did. James Jack was appointed to take it on to the American Congress, then sitting in Philadelphia, with particular instructions to deliver it to the North Carolina Delegation in Congress, (Hooper and Caswell.) When Jack returned, he stated that the Declaration was presented to Congress, and the reply was, that they highly esteemed the patriotism of the citizens of Mecklenburg; but they thought the measure too premature.

I am confident that the Declaration of Independence by the people of Mecklenburg was made public at least twelve months before that of the Congress of the United States.

I do certify that the foregoing statement, relative to the Mecklenburg Independence, is correct, and which I am willing to be qualified to, should it be required.

Yours respectfully.

JOHN DAVIDSON.

Doct. J. M. ALEXANDER.

NOTE.—The following is a copy of an original paper furnished by the writer of the foregoing certificate, from which it would seem, that from the period of the Mecklenburg Declaration every individual friendly to the American cause was furnished by the *Chairman of that meeting*, ABRAM ALEXANDER, with testimonials of the character he had assumed; and in this point of view the paper affords strong collateral testimony of the correctness of many of the foregoing certificates.

NORTH CAROLINA, MECKLENBURG COUNTY, }
November 28, 1775. }

These may certify to all whom they may concern, that the bearer hereof, William Henderson, is allowed here to be a true friend to liberty, and signed the Association.

Certified by

ABRAM ALEXANDER, *Chairman*
of the Committee of P. S.

Mecklenburg, T Oct. 1, 1830.

DEAR SIR,—Yours of 21st ultimo was duly received. In answer I have only to say, that little is in my possession on the subject alluded to which you have not already seen. Subjoined are the certificates of two gentlemen of this county, whose respectability and veracity are attested by their acquaintances here, as well as by the accompanying testimonials of the magistrates in whose neighborhood they reside. With this you will also receive extracts from letters on the same subject from gentlemen well known to you, and to the country at large.

I am, very respectfully, yours, &c.

J. G. M. RAMSEY.

CERTIFICATE OF JAMES JOHNSON.

I, James Johnson, now of Knox county, Tennessee, but formerly of Mecklenburg county, North Carolina, do hereby certify, that to the best of my recollection, in the month of May, 1775, there were several meetings in Charlotte concerning the impending war. Being young, I was not called on to take an active part in the same; but one thing I do positively remember, that she (Mecklenburg county) did meet and hold a Convention, declared independence, and sent a man to Philadelphia with the proceedings. And I do further certify, that I am well acquainted with several of the men who formed or constituted said Convention, viz. John M'Knitt Alexander, Hezekiah Alexander, Abraham Alexander, Adam Alexander, Robert Irwin, Neill Morrison, John Flenniken, John Queary.

Certified by me this 11th day of October, 1827.

JAMES JOHNSON.

In my seventy third year

CERTIFICATE OF ELIJAH JOHNSON AND JAMES WILHITE.

We, Elijah Johnson and James Wilhite, acting Justices of the Peace for the county of Knox, do certify, that we have been a long time well acquainted with Samuel Montgomery and James Johnson, both residents of Knox county; and that they are entitled to full credit, and any statement they may make to implicit confidence.

Given under our hands and seals this 4th day of October 1830.

ELIJAH JOHNSON, (Seal.)

JAMES WILHITE, (Seal.)

Justices of the Peace for Knox county.

NOTE.—Mr. Montgomery's certificate does not purport to state the facts as having come under his own personal observation. It is therefore omitted in this publication.

PROCEEDINGS

OF THE

CUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION.

At a general meeting of the several committees of the district of Wilmington, held at the court house in Wilmington, Tuesday the 20th June, 1775.

Resolved, That the following association stand as the association of this committee, and that it be recommended to the inhabitants of this district to sign the same as speedily as possible.

THE ASSOCIATION.

The actual commencement of hostilities against the continent by the British troops in the bloody scene on the 19th of April last near Boston—the increase of arbitrary impositions from a wicked and despotic ministry, and the dread of instigated insurrections in the colonies, are causes sufficient to drive an oppressed people to the use of arms: We therefore, the subscribers of Cumberland county, holding ourselves bound by that most sacred of all obligations, the duty of good citizens towards an injured country, and thoroughly convinced that under our distressed circumstances, we shall be justified before you in resisting force by force: DO UNITE ourselves under every tie of religion, and honour, and associate as a band in her defence against every foe; hereby solemnly engaging, that whenever our Continental or Provincial councils shall decree it necessary, we will go forth and be ready to sacrifice our lives and fortunes to secure her freedom and safety: This obligation to continue in full force, until a reconciliation shall take place between Great Britain and America, upon constitutional principles: an event we most ardently desire; and we will hold all those persons inimical to the liberty of the colonies, who shall refuse to subscribe to this association, and we will, in all things follow the advice of our General Committee respecting the purposes aforesaid, the preservation of peace and good order, and the safety of individual and private property.

Robt. Rowan,
Maurice Nowlan,
Theophilus Evans,
Joseph De Lesline,
John Overler,
Micajah Terrell,
John Wilson,
Tho. Rae,
James Emmitt,
Aaron Varden,
Oners West,
George Fletcher,
James Pearl,

Lewis Barge,
Martin Leonard,
Thos. Moody,
Arthur Council,
David Shephard,
Peter Messer,
Thomas Cabein,
Daniel Douse,
James Dick,
John Stephenson,
William Bathgate,
Charles Stevens,
John Parker,

Walter Murray,
 William Gillespie,
 Philip Herin,
 Robert Varner,
 John Elwell,
 David Dunn,
 Simon Bandy,
 Robert Greer,
 Joshua Hadley,
 William Blocker,
 Saml. Hollingsworth,
 John Glendenin,
 William Carver,
 James Edmunds,

John Carraway,
 William Herin,
 David Evans,
 James Gee,
 Benjamin Elwell,
 William White,
 Joseph Greer,
 Thomas White,
 John Jones,
 Robert Council,
 James Giffy,
 Robert Carver,
 Samuel Carver,
 George Barnes,

FROM THE RALEIGH REGISTER OF SEPTEMBER 20, 1830.

We copy the subjoined article from the North Carolina Journal, for the purpose of rendering justice to a Patriot whose reputation has been assailed, as well as to substantiate the claim of North Carolina, to the honor of having been the first to "pledge the lives, the fortunes, and the sacred honor," of her citizens, in the perilous struggle for emancipation. When we first cast our eyes over Mr. JEFFERSON's letter in relation to this subject, we were struck with the contemptuous manner in which Mr. HOOPER's name was mentioned, and intended investigating the truth of the insinuations, which the distinguished author of the Declaration of Independence permitted himself to use towards him, no doubt from a misconception of his character, derived from the prejudiced statements of others. The fact stated by the Journal, no doubt from good authority, shows, that so far from having been disaffected in the cause, Mr. HOOPER was a prominent and zealous co-worker with FRANKLIN, MORRIS, and LEE—an association with whom alone, if no other testimony could be adduced, would be sufficient to rescue his name from the appellation of a *Tory*!

The publication of Mr. Jefferson's letter of the 9th July, 1819, to Mr. Adams, has caused no little surprise. A regard to historical truth, to the character of North Carolina, and to the reputation of departed worth, renders some notice of that letter proper.

With every disposition in the world to pay due respect to the memory of Mr. Jefferson as the author of the Declaration of American Independence—as a man of talents—as a profound statesman—as a patriot, and as a benefactor to his country, we must be allowed to say that he was a man of violent prejudices, whose feelings sometimes betrayed his better judgment, and that in writing the letter in question, he was guilty of manifest injustice to the patriotism of North Carolina and to the reputation of one of her worthiest and most patriotic citizens.

The part which North Carolina took in the war of the Revolution, evinced the patriotism and devotedness of her citizens. She did not stand back, and council with prudence, until it was ascertained that all the colonies would make one common quarrel with Great Britain, on account of her oppressions. With generous ardour she promptly came forward, and long before Congress had declared the Independence of the States, in va-

rious assemblages of her citizens, she had entered into *written* engagements to resist the aggressions of Great Britain, and in one of them, had actually declared her independence of her mother country. If these movements on the part of North Carolina were unknown to Mr. Jefferson, it certainly formed no reason, with him, to disbelieve them in after times. Neither is it any proof that those movements were never made. The truth is, they were known, at the time, to her members in Congress, and the probability is, to the whole of that body, including Mr. Jefferson also, though they may have escaped his recollection.

The Mecklenburg meeting, and the declaration there adopted, are placed beyond all doubt and controversy. We leave this matter and the proofs of it to the pamphlet published by Col. Polk, and the remarks of the Editors of the Raleigh Register, copied into our columns to-day. Our object at this time, is to direct public attention to two other facts, resting on indubitable evidence, and which go very far to prove the early stand which this State took in the cause of the revolution, and to rescue the reputation of a departed patriot from the obloquy which Mr. Jefferson would cast upon it.

We have, at this moment, before us the original articles of an association for the county of Cumberland, adopted and signed in the month of June, 1775, of which an accurate copy is subjoined. Those articles imply, that associations were formed throughout the whole District of Wilmington, whose objects were the same with the Cumberland association. They breathe a spirit of manly resistance scarcely to be expected in those who had always lived under colonial bondage, and they looked towards reconciliation with the mother country only upon "*Constitutional terms.*" The spirit of patriotism must have been actively instilled into the public mind, before associations like this could have found favor with the people: the wrongs of the people must have been keenly felt, before men would have talked of redressing them by an appeal to arms. In truth, the paper which we now present, is of itself, a Declaration of Independence. Of its authenticity, there is not a shadow of doubt. Several of those who subscribed it, were personally known to us. There are many persons, now residing in Fayetteville, who know most of the subscribers, and it has not been two years since David Shephard, one of the signers, died in this place. The original articles of the association are in the writing of Col. Rowan; at his death they passed to his kinsman and representative, William B. Grove, Esq. in whose writing is this endorsement: "Cumberland Association, 1775." Upon the death of Mr. Grove, the paper came into the possession of Mr. David Hay, who left it, when he removed from this State, in the custody of Major Thos. J. Robeson, who is the present holder of it. [See the preceding article, "Proceedings of the Cumberland Association."]

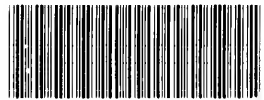
The other fact to which we call attention, at this time, refers to that part of Mr. Jefferson's letter in which he calls Mr. Hooper a "*Tory.*"

The reasons, which Mr. Jefferson had for this charge against Mr. Hooper, he does not give, nor is there any part of Mr. Hooper's life or conduct, on which such a charge could be justly made, as far as we ever heard. So far from doubting the patriotism of Mr. Hooper, the continental Congress, of which he was an early member, gave strong and decisive proof, that they held his patriotism, his integrity and his intelligence in the very highest

estimation. Mr. Hooper, together with Doctor Franklin, Robert Morris and Richard Lee, formed the *Secret Committee* of Congress, to which was *confided all intercourse with foreign nations*, previous to the Declaration of Independence. A more important or confidential committee was never raised by any body of men, and it is very certain, that none but tried and well approved patriots would have been placed upon it. This committee had the *exclusive* control over our foreign intercourse: it negotiated with France for a supply of arms, ammunition and clothing; it had its secret agents at several of the Courts of Europe, and to show its powers, and the confidence reposed in it by Congress, it is only necessary to mention, that when, through their secret agent, Arthur Lee, an agreement had been made with the French Government, through Beaumarchais, that the French Court should send two thousand pounds sterling worth of arms and ammunition to St. Eustatius, Martinique or Cape Francois, for the use of the Americans, the Committee deemed it necessary to conceal this important information, *even from Congress*, and did so conceal it, until the situation of affairs rendered its disclosure proper. Would Congress have reposed such powers in a man who was a *Tory*?

But there is ample testimony of other kinds, to prove Mr. Hooper's devotion to the cause of liberty and his country.—We will soon present to the public the proceedings of a Convention held at Johnston court house in 1775, to vote supplies to the inhabitants of Boston, at which Mr. Hooper presided. Our object is not to attack Mr. Jefferson, but to rescue the memory of Mr. Hooper from unmerited abuse, and to award to North Carolina the credit due to her.

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